

## Cycling Without Age in St. Mary's County, Maryland

What started as a movement in Copenhagen to help the elderly get back on bicycles, has quickly gained popularity, spreading throughout Denmark and to over 47 other countries, now has over 2,050 Cycling Without Age Chapters.

St. Mary's County in Maryland has its very own Chapter, led by Christina Allen. Christina was inspired to start the chapter in St. Mary's County to help seniors be more mobile. Christina stated, "Unfortunately, it can be easy for seniors to be forgotten because many are immobile and don't have a means to get around. With COVID-19, I hope that people realize what it's like to feel isolated because many of our seniors feel the same way." Christina also shared that, "Many seniors don't have a convenient way to get around to get groceries, visit a friend, have lunch out, or even get some fresh air, and I believe that Cycling Without Age can help improve their quality of life." One of the Cycling Without Age guiding principles is: to let people age in a positive context - fully aware of the opportunities that lie ahead when interacting in their local community.



The idea to start the first chapter of Cycling Without Age came about a couple years ago and, in August 2019, their first trishaw arrived from Copenhagen. A trishaw is a three wheeled vehicle for carrying people (senior passenger), pedaled by the pilot (Cycling without age representative). To get started, a senior just needs to get in contact with a Cycling without age representative and schedule a free ride. Christina takes all requests into consideration and carefully maps out the safest route possible, "sometimes the routes available are not safe for my trishaw to go on because of access to only high speed roads or limited right of way, but we do try our best to accommodate all requests."

To date, the furthest ride that Christina has given has been 22 miles. The distance may not be overly long, but the delight on her passenger's faces is just priceless and makes it all worthwhile. Christina also shared the great health benefits of biking and always encourages everyone to get out and try it. The trishaw has a red hood, which can serve as a physical barrier and support social distancing measures during and after COVID-19. When things go back to normal, Christina would love to see more people on bikes and seniors and less-abled on her trishaw. The chapter in St. Mary's County has future goals to have additional trishaws available in the northern parts of the County. Other chapters are starting throughout Maryland and hope to have trishaws soon.

For more information on Cycle Without Age, St. Mary's County, please visit:  
<https://www.facebook.com/CWASMC>